

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. It's getting to where an American can't get any real news from mainstream American news organizations; we have to read the foreign papers online to have any idea what's really going on in Iraq or Palestine/Israel or anywhere else in the world.

Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter. I'm appalled that we hear more about Michael Jackson and his sister's breast than we do about Abu Graib and free fire zones and attacks on the Green Zone and corruption in the recent Afghan elections.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. There should be as many owners of newspapers and radio and tv stations as possible, and they should all clearly state their own bias so that we can compare and contrast their coverage accordingly.

Thank you.